

# LETTERS *to the Editor*

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## **Piriform Syndrome**

TO THE EDITOR: I read with great interest the article "Piriform Syndrome" in the June issue (West J Med 124:435-439, Jun 1976).

I would like to call to the reader's attention an excellent article by William Hunter, MD, and Adrienne L. Zihlman, PhD, in which they describe diagnosis and treatment in 36 patients with this syndrome.<sup>1</sup>

GEORGE P. SUSENS, MD  
*San Francisco*

### **REFERENCE**

1. Hunter W, Zihlman A: Abdominal pain from strain of intrapelvic muscles. Clin Orthop 71:279-280, Jul-Aug 1970

## **Preventive Medicine—A Myth?**

TO THE EDITOR: Like the mercenaries of the federal government, the academicians also chant the litany of practicing preventive medicine. What beautiful pictures they draw. "If physicians devoted as much time, energy and skill to minimize the need for medical care as they now devote to its delivery . . ." goes the chant. Do you know what would happen if we did that? Nothing. Not a blessed thing.

The government has tried, and with one of the

most publicized causes of morbidity and mortality in the country—the effects of cigarette smoking. Every package of cigarettes carries the well-known warning. And the result? Smoking continues to increase steadily. The government's effort was a failure.

Every clinician who has worked with his patients to try to get them to lose weight, slow down, give up smoking, start a moderate exercise program or decrease drinking, knows the incredible frustrations and the enormously low return for the effort expended.

In our community, physicians organized a "Home Health Care" lecture series. Put on gratis one evening a week for 13 weeks and publicized in each of the two local papers, we covered one subject a week, including such subjects as pediatric emergencies, adult emergencies, nutrition, skin care, eye care and the like. And the result—no one came. No one really gave a damn.

We have the obligation to continue trying and we will. But the government and the professors should give up this time worn litany. The clinicians know it won't work and the public isn't interested. Until they can come up with a method that works, they should spare us this useless advice.

GORDON BREITMAN, MD  
*Glendale, CA*